

NEW HAMPSHIRE

# National Guard

MAGAZINE

Fall 2007

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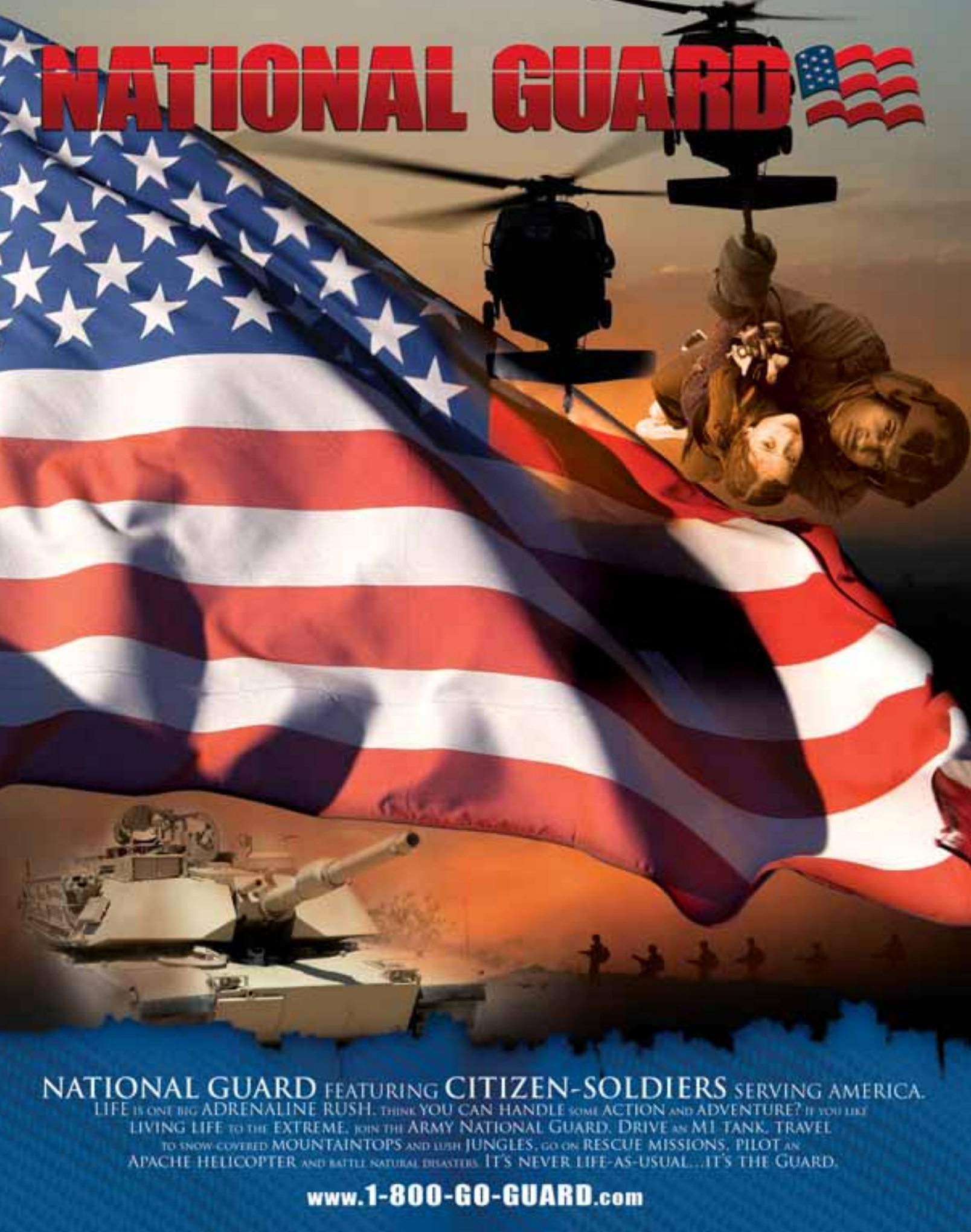
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**STAFF**

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Detachment, NH Army National Guard

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**Bob Ulin**  
Publisher

**Darrell George**  
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**Susan Harrington**  
Editor

**Gloria Schein**  
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NEW HAMPSHIRE

# National Guard

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**On the Cover:** Sgt. Jason Weaver, who served in Iraq with 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery, is one of 48 NH Guard soldiers to earn a Purple Heart in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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# A new playbook for the NH National Guard

## *A Q&A with the TAG*



*In August, the Joint Executive Staff, your key senior Army and Air leadership, took a bold step that could help fortify our ranks in ways that a few years ago seemed impossible.*

*By unanimous decision, they blessed the building blocks of a branding strategy for the New Hampshire National Guard.*

*You might have seen them in a recent press release. If you attended the Air Show, you would have heard them announced over the sound system. And if you bought a Powerball ticket in early September, you would have seen one of them in an advertisement for the NH Guard.*

*Four simple statements that distill into a few words what makes us unique in the eyes of the public:*

*We are NH's citizen soldiers and airmen.*

*When disaster strikes New Hampshire, we mobilize.*

*When our nation is threatened, we respond.*

*Citizen service is our greatest passion.*

*In the world of marketing, they are called core messages. They align a brand's strongest assets with a constituent's greatest beliefs. In other words, they reinforce the public's gut feeling about a particular brand.*

*Last spring, the JES hired Steve Sanger, a Portsmouth-based branding expert, to do the distilling for us. He sat in meetings, interviewed soldiers and airmen, and read anything he could get his hands on about the National Guard and its legacy.*

*He penned the four core messages, and as he explained in his presentation, "they will become our playbook to follow so that all our messaging is clear, concise and consistent." He also gave us a way to implement the playbook, based on a web portal, which the JES is currently deliberating.*

*NH National Guard Magazine recently spoke with our Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, about the core messages and why the time is right for a fresh approach to marketing our organization.*

**NHNG Magazine:** *Why do we need core messages?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** The nation is at a unique point in its history where the threats to our way of life are not just overseas, but at home. The need for people to serve is at a critical juncture and having people understand what service in the NH National Guard means is important to our ability to recruit and retain people. If we can't communicate to them, how do they know what we do?

**NHNG Magazine:** *Is this the first step in a bigger initiative?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** We didn't have anything before. Although these are not new concepts, we have not had a concise way of communicating them. It's not something new. It's a new way of framing of what we've always been. Yes, we want to display it because we think it will help people better understand who we are. Why? Because we want people to be a part of what this organization stands for. I want the New Hampshire National Guard to have 4,000 soldiers and airmen and the only way to get to 4,000 soldiers and airmen is when there is such a demand, that we go to Washington (and make our case for the added personnel.) **Ed. note:** The current strength of the NH National Guard is just under 2,700 soldiers and airmen.

**NHNG Magazine:** *Are you optimistic that we can really get to that level?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** I don't like the word optimistic. I find it an embarrassment that we are a force of 2,700 in New Hampshire with the kind of heritage we have going back to when this state was founded and its history of service. Now in that message I am saying that what we got here is so good that people ought to be knocking down the door to be a part of it. Do I have confidence in the population to be less self-serving and more focused on serving the nation? I don't know how optimistic I am about people in this nation. Right now this nation is a mess. We have this mentality that (the wars overseas) are someone else's problem. My son turns 30 this fall and

*(Continued on page 7)*

# Airman Column

## My greatest moment in Baghdad

*Holding a baby gives Staff Sgt. Jeremy Hutchinson, a medical technician with the 157th Medical Group who deployed in May, a deep sense of purpose.*



*Sgt. Jeremy Hutchinson soothes an Iraqi baby. He called it the greatest moment of his tour.*  
Courtesy photo

Today marks day 114 of my tour here in Baghdad, Iraq.

So far to date, the only day off I have had is the day that I had my wisdom tooth pulled. To say the least, I don't even remember if I enjoyed it or not. However, after busy daily operations, the team received some time off to mentally, physically and emotionally recuperate. This is the account of the day that I call, "My greatest moment in Baghdad."

A few weeks ago, I received an invite to participate in an event that seeks to change the local opinion of America and the soldiers,

airmen, sailors and marines currently deployed to Iraq. The mission, mostly geared towards children, consisted of handing out water, juice boxes, beanie babies, odd toys, stickers; basically whatever we could put together from care packages sent from families and donations organizations have sent here. It's a small operation right now, but it has already proved to be not only meaningful to the children of Baghdad, but also life-changing to those who participate in it.

It's a heart-felt time for volunteers working on their much deserved time off to bring, if even just for a moment, smiles to children who have forgotten or lost everything worth smiling for. We call the mission, "Hearts and Minds." It is a mission I have been searching for and a mission I hoped to accomplish.

As the van pulled into the open field, surrounded by cement barriers and c-wire, armed with semi-automatic weapons, I couldn't help but feel that what I was about to experience could be either amazing or devastating. As we began unloading the van filled with toys and goodies, we all sensed each other's need to just "get this over with." Not the mission, but the introduction. You see, we were unsure of what the children's reaction would be once they saw our U.S. uniforms and our body armor decorated in patches that displayed U.S. pride.

One by one, the children peered into the area where we were, and at first they were hesitant. However, the ice finally broke once their attention was diverted from our strangely unfamiliar uniforms to the presents we brought with us. Soon smiles and good times were once again introduced to them. Maybe it was just for a moment, but the moment was for most of them realizing that our presence here in their country was in the name of their freedom.

Especially meaningful for me was the few intimate moments I shared with an Iraqi baby. For no other reason other than being born in a time of strife, her little life already consisted of tears and pain. At first, when her mother handed me her infant, the baby's cry could not be silenced. Perhaps it was the dirty diaper she had been sitting in or because she was hungry and dehydrated. It wasn't until I held her close and calmly hummed to her that her tears stopped flowing and her cries became a sweet whisper. For a moment, that Iraqi baby felt love from a complete stranger who in this country would otherwise be considered an enemy. After a few precious minutes of time altering exchanges of mutual trust, it was time to leave and say goodbye.

I call it my greatest moment in Baghdad because for several months now, I have encountered and met only "bad" people in Iraq and learned of horrible crimes they have committed. I have seen fellow soldiers leave for duty with great courage and return as examples of honor and duty. Their names and sacrifices have left their mark in the sand for a country that truly seeks freedom from terror. This mission has allowed me to open my heart to the future great citizens of Iraq; the children. I am leaving Iraq knowing that what I have sought out to do has been accomplished. ❖

***"This mission has allowed me to open my heart to the future great citizens of Iraq: the children."***

***—Staff Sgt. Jeremy Hutchinson***

# Soldier Column

## A standup guy

**Sgt. James Tomilson, an infantryman with Mountain Company, was recently recognized for his heroic actions as a local policeman. He looks back on his time in the NH Guard.**

*Editor's note: Many of our New Hampshire National Guardsmen serve the citizens of New Hampshire not only as soldiers and airmen, but as civilians.*

*Last month, Sgt. James R. Tomilson, a soldier with C Company, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), received a certificate and Merit Citation Bar from the Raymond Police Chief David Salois and the Raymond Police Department for his heroic actions on July 14. He is also being considered for a Soldiers Medal.*

*The 10-year veteran of the Raymond police department was investigating a possible case of illegal fireworks when he noticed flames in the bathroom window of a two-story cottage in town.*

*He made his way through the heat and smoke to an incapacitated man, and assisted him to safety.*

As I enter the downhill side of my National Guard career I find myself asking just what it is that has made it so enjoyable. Perhaps the NH Guard has allowed me a way to fulfill the beliefs that I grew up with. These beliefs fell along the lines of "Be prepared," "Do a good turn daily," and "Leave the world a better place than you found it."

These are lofty goals, which were instilled in me by my parents, my church and through scouting. They can be difficult to achieve if one simply goes to work to make money. The Guard, however, has given me the opportunity to achieve these goals as well as work with others who have these same beliefs.

I got into the Guard quite by chance. I was speaking to a recruiter at a gun show in the Manchester Armory. At that time I had had a three-year break in service and had no intention of signing up for anything. He said to me that the Guard was different than my previous military experience and that the Guard had good people that did good things. I thought about that and before I knew it I was signed up on a "try one."

As promised, the Guard was not like my previous service. I had joined regular Army right out of high school. It was a good time, but there were a lot of things about the Army that my free thinking self had trouble adjusting to. An example of this would be the time we had to scrape and repaint three-section tent poles for an inspection.

It seems there were different memorandums regarding this task. One said the tips of the poles should not have paint, while another said they should. My mind said as long as the poles hold the tent, who cares? Even my time in the Reserves was filled with tasks that seemed more like busy work than anything important, such as our monthly folding and refolding of the tents. I did not find that experience very gratifying either.

But when I entered the Guard I saw that the beliefs I mentioned



*Officer James Tomilson, a sergeant with Mountain Company, right, stands next to Raymond Police Chief David Salois shortly after receiving the Meritorious Service Award. Tomilson was presented the prestigious law enforcement award for evacuating a man from a burning cottage in July.*

*Photo: Courtesy of Toby Henry*

above are embodied in the Guard's traditions.

We soldiers are expected to be prepared both mentally and physically to leave one's family and home and to assist others in need both locally and globally. Being prepared to do this painful task for the betterment of others makes the world a better place, one very important tenet that I live by.

The more prepared I become; however, the more anxious I get when I see new equipment in the drill hall. This usually means that next I may be spending time away from home. I guess that is an

occupational hazard that the general public wouldn't understand.

Ten years later, I look back and see that through the Guard I have been truly fortunate to have met and worked with not only good people but also great people. I have had the opportunity to take part in a small way in making the world a better place, not

only in my home state, but abroad. The Guard, through action, makes things happen. Whether it is filling sandbags and manning traffic posts during floods here in New Hampshire or manning traffic posts and training police in another country. The Guard truly is "Americans at their best." A bumper sticker slogan is probably not the best way to sum up what my feelings about being a part of the Guard are, but it fits.

I have also found that the Guard has afforded me the opportunity to grow personally though it has come at a cost. In today's climate of deployments I have had to pass on opportunities in my professional life due to the specter of deployment. I cannot in good faith take a position that requires more time from me knowing that I will be called away and the time my employer spent training me will not be used. Would I enlist in the National Guard if I could do it all over again? Absolutely. ❖

***"Would I enlist in the National Guard if I could do it all over again? Absolutely."***

***—Officer James Tomilson***

# Air show soars for a worthy cause

By Sgt. 1st Class Mark Roberts, 114th MPAD, and Staff Sgt. Dorrin Finley, 157th ARW PA

**NEWINGTON** – The Pease/Wings of Hope Air Show drew more than 100,000 spectators on Aug. 18 and 19, celebrating the Air Force and raising awareness for a number of New Hampshire charities, most notably the Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire.

“We (the New Hampshire National Guard) are the community,” said Lt. Col. Rick Greenwood, military director for the air show. “This is our way of letting the community know that we are here to help them and to show our appreciation of their support of our airmen and soldiers.”

The two-day event at Pease Air National Guard Base raised thousands of dollars in charitable donations, and was used to kickoff Air Force Week New England, part of a national campaign to honor the 60th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force and recognize its contributions to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It was the first air show hosted by the 157th Air Refueling Wing since 2000. Pease was the only Air National Guard base chosen out of six sites to host this year as part of the anniversary celebration.

Families roamed the ramp and enjoyed static displays of jet engines, military and civilian aircrafts of all makes and models. Overhead there was an impressive lineup of aerial exhibitions throughout the weekend including a wing-walker, B-2 flyover, F-16, NH Army Guard Black Hawk and a military parachute team.

Susan Clark of Berwick, Maine, who has a daughter in the military, brought her grandchildren to their first air show.

*“This is our way of letting the community know that we are here to help them and to show our appreciation of their support of our airmen and soldiers.”*

– Lt. Col. Rick Greenwood



Alex N. Vastistas, 13 years old, Newmarket, NH, waves after being properly fitted with a flight helmet by Airman 1st Class Jennifer M. Rouleau, of Milan, 157th Air Refueling Wing, Pease, ANGB.



Spc. Asa M. Bourrie, Concord, NH, of the 237th MP Co., shows Samuel R. West the view from behind a MK-19 atop an Army Humvee.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Attila Fazekas, NHNG

“The kids really enjoy this and it is an event that they will never forget,” she said.

“It’s good for the children to see the military in this light,” added Becky Larson of Epsom, who brought her two children. “The kids are overjoyed to be surrounded by the men and women in uniform. This air show shows the softer side of the military and this will leave an imprint on their lives.”

They also had a chance to see the NH Army National Guard in action.

Children were climbing in and out of helicopters, Humvees and trucks while their parents talked to soldiers about their service and their missions. Twenty recruiting leads were generated, according to Brig. Gen. Stephen Burritt, commander of the NH Army National Guard.

“With all these young boys and girls, you don’t know who is going to be the next KC-135 pilot or the next medevac pilot,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Fisher, a crew member with the NH Army Guard’s 238th Medical Company. “At what point does it click?”

Several NH Guardsmen manning displays said it clicked for them at a young age when they had a similar hands-on experience at a local fair.

“I was at the Deerfield Fair and got a chance to hold a Mark 19,” said Spc. Asa Bourrie, a soldier with the 237th Military Police Company. “The minute I charged it – it took a couple of times – I knew.”

Spc. Timothy Thompson, also an MP, said it was exciting to be a part of such a large show.

“It’s easy to stay motivated when the people are so supportive of the military,” he said.

As a combat veteran of Iraq, Thompson said he had “a deep appreciation for the Air Force and the air support that soldiers receive during ground operations; in fact, I can’t wait to see the B-2 Bomber that’s supposed to show up.” ♦



# A new playbook for the NH National Guard (Continued from page 3)

he's always been, "Why would anyone want to join the military?" and he's literally thinking about joining the National Guard. His mother told him that if you join the NH Army National Guard you could go to Iraq; his response was "Someone has to do it."

**NHNG Magazine:** *Why are we doing this now? Is it perfect timing for us to implement a branding strategy?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** The timing isn't perfect. The timing is mandatory.

**NHNG Magazine:** *Why didn't we do this five years ago, 10 years ago?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** Because we got a focus on 9-11 and we put an exclamation point behind it with Katrina. There are two threats to this nation that we have not been paying enough attention to: The terrorist threat or manmade disaster and the threat of natural disaster. We didn't get a new mission. We got a new focus. We've got this mission forever. Steve (Sanger) has taken the language in front of our noses and put in four short phases that have enough action in them to comprehend what we are talking about.

**NHNG Magazine:** *Is it a matter of we are not doing a good enough job of getting people to join or is it because our nation is so detached from the military? Something like one half of one percent of the nation knows someone who is in the military?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** I am optimistic about what we have to offer, but it's based in the belief that being a citizen of this nation bears a certain responsibility. That's where igniting that belief is a challenge.

**NHNG Magazine:** *You've been the TAG for two and half years, through one of the most intense periods in our organization's history. Is it sinking in? This idea of service before self?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** Unequivocally, yes. The floods, all of them, including Katrina, have given us an entrance into the market that wasn't there before. And the CST (Civil Support Team) has helped with that. For the first time, we have an organization that is not focused on missions overseas. It's the mission here. Is it happening fast enough? No. Not for me. That's why we are doing this. I hate to be the bearer of a bad forecast but it's going to take one more event. We need one more terrorist event for those people sitting around with a little guilt, who see what happened on 9-11 as something that happened six years ago and it's someone else's problem.

**NHNG Magazine:** *Have we been too fat and happy?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** The world has changed so radically in the last 25 years. The globalization that has occurred has made our natural defenses much less natural. There is so much flow in and out of the country – commerce, people, electrons – that its nigh to impossible to erect a fence. In order to understand security you have to understand how people would use all those venues to attack us and then you've got to intercept those attacks. There is this cartoon I love, it's a house with a white picket fence and it says "Homeland Defence" with a "C"

and it has lots of pickets missing. The idea is you can't build a Homeland Defense that will pull things out unilaterally.

**NHNG Magazine:** *Do the core messages correlate with the soldiers' and airmen's reasons for joining?*

**Maj. Gen. Clark:** I'm convinced people are joining us for the right reasons. The incentives help, but the people who are joining have their eyes wide open and want to serve and for some that means "Go on mission." All you have to do is look at the Military Police Company. ♦

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# NH Guardsmen get a taste of Salvadoran hospitality

## *Troop Command takes part in multinational peacekeeping conference*

By Sgt. Luke Koladish, 114th MPAD



From left: Chief Petty Officer Leroy Saunders of the Bahamas Navy, Maj. Raymond Valas, executive officer of 54th Troop Command and Maj. Eugen Phillip Antigua of the Barbado Defense Force develop a policy for an escalation of force during a breakout session of PKO North, 2007, held in El Salvador from Aug. 20 to 25. Photo: 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, 114th MPAD

**SAN SALVADOR** – An eight-man team from 54th Troop Command took part in a multinational peacekeeping conference sponsored by U.S. Southern Command and hosted by U.S. Army South and the Salvadoran Armed Forces, Aug. 20-25.

Peacekeeping Operation North was a five-day conference that focused on the concerns of nations from Central and South America, and the Caribbean Island nations. More than 200 representatives from 22 Latin American countries gathered to discuss similar issues and challenges affecting peacekeeping operations worldwide.

Currently, 13 Latin American countries are involved in 15 United Nations peacekeeping operations.

“This type of training will help both in peacekeeping missions and in combat,” said Capt. Brian Fernandes of Manchester, commander of Company C, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain). “Right now there is a lot of overlap between peacekeeping operations and actual combat. We are receiving the kind of information that soldiers can take with them to Iraq and Afghanistan as well as when they conduct PKO in places like Bosnia or Haiti.”

Headquartered in Miami, SOUTHCOM approached the New Hampshire National Guard to participate in the PKO North 2007 because of their relationship with

El Salvador through its State Partnership Program, which began seven years ago.

Lt. Col. John Cuddy, commander of 54th Troop Command, said his soldiers were able to share their knowledge gained from overseas deployments as well as their experience working with private volunteer organizations and non-government organizations in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

“The U.S. military provides a great background for a lot of command and control opportunities, and a structure for decision making that would be beneficial in a humanitarian operation,” said Cuddy.

El Salvador currently has 38 civilian law enforcement personnel deployed to Haiti and Timor-Leste (South Pacific) in support of United Nations operations. The Central American republic recently deployed their ninth contingent of soldiers to Iraq. They are the only Latin American country currently serving there in support of Coalition Forces.

“Peacekeeping operations involve every country in the world, and as such everyone has to take action and responsibility,” said Maj. Gen. Jorge Molina, joint chief of staff of for Salvadoran Armed Forces. “We have been on the receiving end of support with our own conflict in the late 1980s. This is an opportunity to reciprocate as well as

provide what we have learned from our own experiences.”

Representatives from the Caribbean, who do not normally participate in peacekeeping operations, had the opportunity to meet with experienced representatives from Chile, Brazil, Uruguay and NH Army Guardsmen.

“Traditional challenges include operational differences, equipment compatibility, and of course culture,” said Maj. Sergio Villarreal, the operations officer for PKO North 2007. “Just different ways of working in different militaries.”

Following the presentation of a topic, the NH soldiers were divided among two of 10 breakout groups.

The advantage of the breakouts was a tailored process created by a better student to teacher ratio, vignettes highlighting lessons learned and scenarios for each group to develop their own plan, Villarreal said.

The first topic covered was the prevention of Isolation and Hostage Situations. Given a battalion size element to ensure peace and stability along a 200-mile border between “Morgulia” and “Fulcon,” two fictitious countries, participants answered eight questions concerning policy and procedures for personnel recovery.

“I personally hope to gain some insight for my unit deploying in the future,” said Maj. Scott Loring of Belmont, who commands the 114th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. Loring hopes to apply lessons from the personnel recovery briefings to prevent his soldiers from becoming future victims of isolation.

Three of Loring’s soldiers provided public affairs support for the peacekeeping exercise.

Representatives from the various countries and the NH Army Guardsmen discussed a plan for an escalating alert processes as well as how to organize quick reactionary forces from different elements for search and rescue, as well as training to prevent a personnel recovery situation.

“It was very interesting. Now I know more about what to do if I am a hostage and what to teach my men,” said Inspector Carlos Romero, a Salvadoran police officer, who recently completed a two-year peacekeeping mission in Haiti.

SOUTHCOM conducts peacekeeping and humanitarian exercises several times a year throughout Central and South America. The most recent was last month in Ecuador.

Last year, a team of NH Army and Air National Guard medics spent two weeks in the province of Morazán, El Salvador providing basic medical care to local citizens. The real-world training exercise was the best experience of their military careers, many said, because they were directly assisting people in need. ♦

# 3643rd touches down in Gulfport, Sept. 12, after year in Iraq



*Spc. Rachel Glover, 3643rd Security Forces, receives an enthusiastic welcome home from Sgt. Maj. Gregory Crotto, Master Sgt. Raymond Persinger and Sgt. Maj. Robert Stewart.*

Photo: NH Army National Guard Sgt. Luke Koladish



*Sgt. Maj. Gregory Crotto welcomes home Spc. Ryan Burris, 3643rd Security Forces, of Milford. His brother, Pfc. David Burris, 237th MP, departed for Iraq from the same airstrip less than an hour before his return.*

Photo: NH Army National Guard Sgt. Luke Koladish



*New Hampshire Army National Guard commander Brig. Gen. Stephen Burritt and Chief of Staff Col. Richard Duncan greet soldiers of the 3643rd Security Forces upon their return from a year-long deployment to Iraq.*

Photo: NH Army National Guard Sgt. Luke Koladish

## Airman is Top Gun in state marksmanship competition

### 3643rd Hellcats take team title

By Staff Sgt. Attila Fazekas, 114th MPAD

**FORT DEVENS** – Master Sgt. Samuel Blackwell earned Top Gun honors as the NH National Guard’s best marksman at the annual state competition held here from Aug 3 to 5.

Another airman, Staff Sgt. John Correia of the 157th Civil Engineers, won the Dilboy Trophy as the NH Guard’s best combat rifleman.

Hosted by the NH National Guard Small Arms Readiness and Training Section (SARTS), the competition pitted teams from the New Hampshire Army and Air National Guard.

The Dilboy award is named for Army Private 1st Class George Dilboy, who was awarded the Medal of Honor during World War I. He was a Keene resident who emigrated from Greece.

Blackwell took second in the rifle competition, followed by Sgt. Jeffery Jordan of the NH Army Guard’s 3643rd Maintenance Company.

The top three combat pistol shooters were Officer Candidate Mark Fazio of the NH Army Guard’s 195th Regional Training Institute, Tech. Sgt. Michael Bane of the 157th Air Refueling Wing and Blackwell.

Fazio was awarded the Lieutenant Wheeler Trophy. The Wheeler Trophy is awarded in honor of 2nd Lt. Chester Wheeler of Concord, who was in the first wave of troops to land at Massacre Bay, Attu Island in the Aleutian chain on May 11, 1943.

Staff Sgt. Bryan Donisi of the 3643rd Maintenance Company and Sgt. 1st Class Walter Dellinger of Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery took second and third in the combined rifle and pistol scores category.



*Air Force Staff Sgt. John M. Correia, Dover, serving with the 157th CEF and Base Fireman, Pease Air Base, reviews shot placement on the zero range with Army Sgt. 1st Class Roderick R. Greenwood, a weapons instructor with the NH SARTS Team.*

The 3643rd Maintenance Company’s “Hellcats” comprised of Donisi, Sgt. Hoon Nowack, Sgt. Christopher Mason and Jordan took top team honors.

Although all NH Guard members are welcome to compete, the state competition is the culmination of four months of training for SARTS. The training is also used to enhance unit members skills and the units overall readiness.

“We are here to help units,” said Maj. Roy Hunter, SARTS commander. “SARTS trains unit trainers; they in turn train unit members.” ❖



# 48 Purple Hearts

*A Veterans Day salute to a new generation of warriors*

With Veterans Day less than a month away, we pay homage to our generation of combat hardened by showcasing the New Hampshire National Guard Purple Heart recipients from operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

There are 48 so far. Two recipients, Staff Sgt. Francis M. Chmielecki and

Spc. Aaron Lee Marshall, are not pictured here.

Originally, we gathered the photos for an exhibit at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in Vails Gate, New York. Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Demers led the project. It took the better part of a year to collect all the photos and information.

Each one of these photos represents a story worth telling. Sgt. Jeremiah Holmes was our first KIA in March of 2004. A new father, he served in the 744th Transportation Company. That fall, we lost Spec. Alan J. Burgess, a 2nd Battalion soldier, known for his compassion.

Staff Sgt. Jose Pequeno is still in rehab as the result of a severe head injury he suffered in an ambush while serving with the Snow Stormers in the spring of 2006. His good friend Spc. Richard Ghent earned a Silver Star and Purple Heart in the same attack for returning fire until reinforcements arrived. Ghent was blown out of his turret and shot in the back.

Sgt. Jason Weaver, who we featured on the cover, was part of a patrol of soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery that included Staff Sgt. Dale Sollars, Spc. Ryan Weeden and Spc.

Gerald Lamson. They were driving along an Iraqi highway one morning in March of 2004 when they took gunfire from a passing truck. Weaver caught an AK-47 round in the chest plate of his flak vest.

They returned to base camp and several hours later, the same patrol went back to the same location. They found the truck, surrounded it, and by the time the firefight ended all four enemy combatants were dead and a cache of arms was recovered. In the return engagement, Weaver was shot in the leg. Lamson was hit in the hands. Sollars and Weeden were injured in a later attack.

Those are just a few of the many stories of duty and sacrifice worth remembering on Nov. 11. ♦



*Sgt. Anna M. Anelli*



*Sgt. 1st Class Eric Bates*



*Staff Sgt. Matthew S. Bernard*



*Spc. Alan J. Burgess*



*Sgt. Rich R. Capen*



*Staff Sgt. Timothy S. Colby*



*Staff Sgt. Dale E. Creveling III*



*Spc. Mark R. Davis*



*Sgt. Thomas A. Flood*



*Sgt. Jonathan C. Foote*



*Sgt. Randal S. Frotton*



*Spc. William E. Garneau*



*Spc. Richard Alan Ghent*



*Spc. Justin J. Hileman*



*Spc. Douglas R. Hohler*



*Spc. Jameson M. Holmes*



*Sgt. Jeremiah J. Holmes*



*Spc. Jamie M. Houston*



*1st Lt. Peter R. Kudarauskas*



*Spc. Gerald A. Lamson*



*Sgt. Stephen E. Lord*



*Sgt. Christopher B. McWilliams*



*Spc. Rafe E. Moody*



*Sgt. Robert A. Pavnick*



*Spc. Wayne G. Pearson Jr.*



*Staff Sgt. Jose L. Pequeno*



*Spc. Timothy J. Plaisted*



*Spc. Nathan L. Rancloes*



*Staff Sgt. Scott A. Robbins*



*Spc. David R. Ryder*



*Sgt. Gregory D. Sears*



*Sgt. Douglas A. Sirois*



*Spc. Richard F. Show Jr.*



*Sgt. 1st Class Donald M. Smialek*



*Sgt. Nathan R. Smith*



*Pfc. Jonathan L. Snodgrass*



*Staff Sgt. Dale T. Sollars*



*Staff Sgt. Douglas S. Stone*



*Pfc. Frederick G. Swallow*



*Spc. Scott F. Tacker*



*Staff Sgt. Norman W. Vallee*



*Sgt. Marc A. Varrieres*



*Sgt. Jason H. Weaver*



*Spc. Ryan B. Weeden*



*Spc. Aaron C. Whitcomb*



*Sgt. Jon F. Worrall*

# Mass formation signals historic shift of NH Army Guard

By SPC Kathleen Briere, 114th MPAD

**MANCHESTER** – On an unseasonably muggy day with temperatures in the 90’s, family, friends and retirees witnessed the long-awaited New Hampshire Army National Guard Transformation Ceremony at Gill Stadium in Manchester on Sept. 8.

Gov. John Lynch and U.S. Sen. John Sununu joined Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the Adjutant General of the NH National Guard, Brig. Gen. Stephen Burritt, the Commander of the NH Army Guard, and other senior leadership to address more than 700 NH Army National Guard soldiers.

The formation, the first time in the NH Army Guard’s recorded history all of its units were represented at one time, was an impressive and historic display.

“This is the biggest ceremony New Hampshire will see in our lifetime,” said Lt. Col John Cuddy, commander of 54th Troop Command. “This is the Super Bowl for the transformation, but there is still a lot of work to be done in conjunction with the full-time Army.”

Two units of the 197th Headquarters Brigade, the 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Brigade, and the 1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery were inactivated and consolidated into a single field artillery battalion, which was designated the 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery.

The 3643rd Maintenance Company and the 744th Truck Company, who fell under 54th Troop Command, were also deactivated. In their place, a new battalion called the 3643rd Brigade Support Battalion was created, which now falls under the 197th Fires Brigade.

The 3643rd BSB will take with them both personnel and equipment from their formerly designated units of the 54th



*Lt. Col. James Moody, deputy commander of the new Fires Brigade, salutes during the National Anthem at the Transformation Ceremony at Gill Stadium on Sept. 8. Moody’s former unit, 1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery, was inactivated during the ceremony. Photo: Sgt. Luke Koladish, 114th MPAD*

Troop Command.

The transformation, which was marked by the changing of unit guidons, will be completed in the new force structure on Oct. 1.

Altogether, 13 guidons were furled or retired. For the 2nd BN, 197 FA and the 1st BN 172nd FA, there were five each to include the battery level guidons. Under the 54th Troop Command, three guidons were furled. One guidon for each: the 210th Engineer Detachment from Peterborough, the 744th Truck Company and the 3643rd Maintenance Company.

In their stead, five new guidons were unfurled during the event. They were Det 2, 160th Engineers and the 1986th Support Det., Charlie Company 3rd BN, 238th Aviation, Det. 2 of the 249th Medical Company and the 372nd Signal Company.

As Lynch put it, “This is the future of the NH National Guard.”

The goal, he said, is to have better, more maneuverable units that are capable of deploying in support of local, state and federal disasters. ❖



*Lawrence Gilman, Howard Leonard and Robert Duffy of the New Hampshire Governor’s Horse Guards fire the last round of the 1/172nd FA from a ceremonial cannon following the unit’s official deactivation. Photo: Sgt. Luke Koladish, 114th MPAD*

# Dispatch from Afghanistan

## Embedded Training Team focuses on schools, flood victims

*Editor's note: The following is an update from Maj. John LeBlanc, commander of the NH Army National Guard Embedded Training Team. The team has been deployed for eight months.*

Hello from Camp Mike Spann. I hope everyone enjoyed their summer and the children are enjoying the new school year. It is hard to believe that our team has been deployed for almost eight months. That puts us at the half-way point through our 15-month deployment, as well as a third of the way through our 12 months in Afghanistan.

While our team is busy with different missions, and often scattered throughout northern Afghanistan, I try to find time to talk with everyone when we are together at Camp Spann. From these discussions, I am proud to say that our team is accomplishing some great things for the people of Afghanistan. While some individuals may be getting a lot more attention than others, it is important to remember that everyone on our team is making a valuable contribution to bettering the lives of the Afghanistan people.

The 5th Kandak school projects in Balk Province headed by Command Sgt. Maj. David Stevens and Maj. Bill Neville are nearly complete. The new school (adopted by the City of Rochester) is 50 percent complete.

The school renovation project has just begun. Both projects will be completed by the end of November. Members of the 5th Kandak mentor team also conducted a medical assistance visit while in our most western province of Badakshan, in Yamagan District, while conducting Operation Kuistani.

The Jowzjan Police Mentor Team of Capt. Adam Burritt, Capt. Eric Barricklow and Staff Sgt. Zach Bazzi have completed renovations on two schools as well as the building of a sports area consisting of a soccer field and volleyball court. In addition, they have conducted two humanitarian assistance missions.

The first was for flood victims north of their province, assisting 200 families with food, clothing, cookers and tents. The second was for drought victims south of their province where they distributed four tractor trailer loads of rice, beans and wheat.

Their goal is to conduct at least one project in each of their 11 districts.

The 4th Kandak school project and



1st Lt. Eric Barricklow (far right), a member of the NH Army Guard's Embedded Training Team, shares a dinner with Nazar Mohommad, police chief of the Darzab district in southern Jawzjan, Afghanistan. With them are Jim Finn, a DynCorp employee, Sgt. Robert Shearer and Spc. Johnathan Elder, who were part of a security force team. Photo: Courtesy of Barricklow

sports area in the village of Dedadi, headed by Capt. Daniel Ouellette and Staff Sgt. Tim Burns, is going well. A wall and playground have been constructed around the Qalajingi School attended by 1,100 girls, and a sports area consisting of a soccer field, volleyball court and playground is nearly complete. Members of the 4th Kandak mentor team also conducted medical assistance to local villagers in Zebak District, Badakshan Province, during Operation Kuistani.

Thank you to everyone who has mailed us school supplies and other needed items. Please keep them coming. Our team and the people of Afghanistan appreciate your heartfelt contributions.

In closing, I want to thank everyone for their continued support to our team and the people of Afghanistan.

**Chief Master Sgt. Mark Long of the New Hampshire Air National Guard, who is deployed to Afghanistan, recently had a chance to visit with the team at Camp Spann.**

My first night there was very windy, went out at 3 a.m. and there was this flag beating the heck out of the flag pole. As I'm walking along in the dark, half asleep,

trying not to bump or trip on anything, I kept looking at the flag and, wow, it was our New Hampshire state flag!

First thing next morning, I stopped at the B-hut where the flag was. No one home. The New Hampshire guys were out on a patrol. Next day I went back and met Maj. LeBlanc and some of the other NH soldiers. What a small world. These NH warriors had just come back from a 10-plus-day patrol in some real bad territory, way out in the rural mountains. It was humbling to hear them talk so matter of factually about their mission, with no fear or exaggeration about the dangers involved in what they are doing.

I spent some time with Command Sgt. Maj. Stevens, who was real surprised that I was there. He is heavily involved in a project to build and equip two elementary schools. Dave showed me several NH newspaper articles with stories of what he and his group of NH Army National Guardsmen are trying to accomplish.

The NH soldiers looked very good. They have good leaders, take care of each other and they are making a difference. Ours is a small world and this meeting reminded me of how proud I am to be part of our New Hampshire National Guard. ❖

# FROM IRAQ TO MANCHESTER:

## *A story of Kurdish perseverance*

Story and photo by Sgt. Luke Koladish, 114th MPAD

**MANCHESTER** – Most of us at one point or another have walked into a mall or restaurant in uniform. Sometimes you forget you're wearing it until someone asks you if you have been to Iraq or thanks you for your service.

I always feel awkward responding or saying "You're welcome." I think that's mostly because I'm not sure I've ever known anyone who truly believed my deployment directly protected their freedoms.

Until I met Abdul Wahab Najmudin Mohammed.

We first met at the end of June when I walked into Haircuts USA on South Willow Street. It was a last-minute haircut and Abdul's barber shop was the first one I saw on the way home from work at the NH Guard public affairs office in Concord.

He said hello, I replied, and then asked where he was from.

After a brief hesitation, he replied with his head down, "Iraq."

I felt an awkward tension.

"Where in Iraq?"

"Northern Iraq," he replied, not unfriendly but not entirely interested in having a sit-down.

"Kurdistan?" I asked in attempt to show that I was at least somewhat aware there were cultural differences.

His face broke into a smile and he came from around the counter to shake my hand warmly. I told him I had visited northern Iraq briefly during my deployment. (I served in Iraq in 2005 with the NH Army Guard's C Company, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain)).

Then Abdul thanked me, a sincere thank you, because he knew how bad it had been and how much better his home had become. He began telling me bits and pieces of his story, and it compelled me enough to return a few days later to ask him if he would be willing to share his story for this magazine.

"Yes, yes of course, how about you come to my house tomorrow, it is my day off," said Abdul. I was surprised by his eagerness to invite a stranger into the privacy of his home but agreed nonetheless.

I walked down the first-floor hallway of an apartment building on Eastern Avenue. It reminded me of my old place, gray carpeting and white-washed walls that smelled faintly of cigarettes and Lysol.

Inside his apartment, Abdul put his hand on my back and brought me into the living room. We sat down on one of the two black couches that bordered a black and gold rug.

The TV was off and his children, two girls and a boy, sat on the floor to listen to their father and his guest. His wife, Shlear, was in the kitchen. The smells coming from there reminded me of Indian food.

Abdul was born in Kirkuk in 1964, just four years before Saddam Hussein and the Baath party retook control of the government.

Like most Kurdish children in his neighborhood, Abdul spent mornings at a local school. He received excellent marks in reading and writing, but he spent the majority of this afternoons at his brother's place of work – the local barbershop.

His brother, Safe, would finish every haircut by combing the hair with an overlapping razor to even each strand. It was from his brother that Abdul learned his trade.

In 1977, Saddam had become the most feared and powerful individual in the Baath Party. That same year Abdul's uncle became one of many Kurds killed for protesting the way the government treated the Kurdish people.

Today a black and white portrait of Shahab Nuri standing alone at the base of mountains hangs in the Mohammed living room. Each



*Abdul works six days a week as a barber in Manchester. The Iraq native spent 10 years in a refugee camp before relocating with his family to New Hampshire.*

week, Abdul and Shlear place fresh flowers around the frame.

"He was hung with other men in the village, by Saddam's men," Abdul said. He looked away from the picture and held his hand out in quiet frustration, "Because he was Kurdish."

When Abdul was 21, he joined the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in the midst of Saddam's war against the Kurdish guerrillas and Iranians.

Abdul met with other patriots in homes, restaurants and cafes to further their message of a new Iraq.

"We explain the American system of democracy," recalled Abdul. "Saddam promise these things but with no change, just arrest and killing. We say we need freedom. We need change. We need election every four years."

The barber from Kirkuk still carries a wrinkled photo in his wallet of himself and a young Jalal Talabani smiling arm and arm. Talabani, currently the president of Iraq, was the leader of the PUK at the time and Abdul was his barber.

In 1988, Saddam's war against Iran and Kurdish rebels peaked with the horrific chemical attack on Halabja. Saddam unleashed a chemical bombardment of mustard gas and nerve agents killing an estimated 5,000 men, women and children.

In his home in Manchester, Abdul and Shlear flipped through pages of documented photos and testimonies of Kurds that witnessed one of the largest attacks on a civilian population in modern times.

"It is important that we teach our children their culture," Shlear said, "and that they remember where they come from."



The same year of the attack on Halabja, Abdul's father was arrested by Saddam's secret police. He believed it was only a matter of time before he too was arrested.

"No Kurdish people can talk about freedom," said Abdul. "You do and people look for you, to arrest you."

He saw outsiders in streets and shops, and when strangers started asking questions about his brothers, Abdul decided it was time to go.

In the coolest part of the morning, just before sunrise, Abdul boarded a crowded bus headed for Pakistan. He took only a small bag with a change of clothes. The rest of his possessions were left behind.

Thirty-six hours later, he arrived at Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, and brought his case before the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"I tell them I am Kurdish. I fear for my life. I give them my name and they give me a UN refugee card," he said.

"Now I live in Pakistan until resettlement."

For 10 years, from May 1990 until July 10, 2000, what was known as the largest refugee situation in the world was home for Abdul. Here he met Shlear, where they married and had their first two children.

According to the UNHCR, "[Pakistan] is the largest assisted repatriation in modern history and the largest registration of refugees ever conducted."

Of the 1.2 million refugees in 1993, the 1,350 non-Afghans were identified by the Pakistani government as illegal immigrants and had no legal access to work or public services. That left Abdul and his family feeling stranded.

"Everything about that place was horrible," Shlear recalled. "Everything."

Located further south than the Kurdistan, Islamabad's climate was relatively harsh for the refugees from Northern Iraq.

"It was always hot," said Abdul, mimicking the act of shaking sweat from his head. "Sandstorms so bad, you cover your face to walk outside."

Abdul's family remembered watching as a refugee was hit by a car that sped off. People made no

attempt to stop the driver or to aide the man and he died in the street.

Arzoo, the oldest daughter, recalled the apartment they shared with another family. They often lost power.

"The roads were awful, with potholes and gaps everywhere," she said. "You couldn't even drive down most of them."

Shlear described the hospital as little more than a room with a bed where the refugees brought their own sheets and pillows. The meals and medications were paid for with what little money her husband earned from cutting hair at the United Nations Community Center.

"When I have Ala (their second daughter), I remember the stray cats and dogs staying under the hospital beds," said Shlear. "They just came in off the street."

Abdul attended English classes, computer classes and other courses designed to increase his potential for relocation.

As a barber he developed a familiarity with refugees from various countries and he became fluent in Farsi (Afghan and Iranian), Urdu, Turkish and several Arabic dialects.

"People at the UN, they say, 'Come Abdul, what is this man saying?' And so I translate for the refugees."

A letter from Sharifa Panezai, project coordinator of UNHCR Pakistan, describes Abdul as a "soft-spoken and understanding person" who had an "excellent rapport with the refugee community and staff members."

In 2000, Abdul and his family were approved for resettlement in the United States. Before he left, he received word that his father had been released from prison, but died shortly thereafter. The interrogations, often involving electrocution, were too much for an old man

and he never recovered.

The night I visited Abdul and his family, we ate a variety of fresh fruit. Each time Shlear would serve a helping, they would wait until I took the first bite. The hospitality was noticeably different from my own family's approach to guests, which was "First time I'll get it for you, after that you're on your own."

The Mohammed family landed at Manchester Airport on July 12, 2000, and took a van to the International Institute of New Hampshire (IINH) on Pine Street.

The IINH is responsible for setting up newly-arrived families with social security numbers, cash and medical assistance. It provides a job counselor, primary healthcare and assistance for the children to enroll in school within the first 30 days.

"Most refugees have spent their whole life in flight," said Anne Sanderson, vice president of IINH. "For them success is in being able to support themselves, safety for their family, and feeling OK about their new environment."

Abdul and his family moved into a two-bedroom apartment on Bridge Street for \$600 a month. The assistance they received totaled \$610 for the month.

"Some weeks we had only a dollar to spend, and food stamps would not pay for diapers so my daughter would go without," recalled Shlear.

Obligated to take the first job offered as part of his assistance, Abdul went to work for Kalwall Corporation prepping metal for painting. He worked 40 hours a week washing pieces and placing them in ovens to dry for \$8.15 an hour.

Four years later Abdul quit.

"It was not my job," he told me. "I am a barber."

Every night in their Manchester apartment, the Mohammed family

watches a Kurdish news program broadcast via satellite television from Kirkuk, Iraq. In January 2005, a flow of white script across the bottom of the screen informed Abdul that a site would be set up in Washington, D.C., for Iraqi

expatriates to vote in an upcoming election.

Abdul spent the following night driving with a friend through a snowstorm to vote for the first time in his life. He was 41 years old. The following December, Abdul flew down to Virginia with his wife to vote for the 275-member permanent assembly.

In April of 2006, Abdul passed the New Hampshire barber exam with a 95 percent. Soon after he was hired at Haircuts USA.

"He was laid back, quiet, professional and happy," said Manager Darlene Butcher. "He doesn't talk a lot. He can feel people's vibe and knows when they want to talk and when they want to be quiet. He has an excellent clientele. In fact, he's the only one with a clientele."

A year ago, Abdul returned to Kirkuk to visit his family for the first time since he fled in 1990.

"People were happy, they don't worry about being captured when they walk down the street," he said.

Abdul admitted that parts of Kirkuk could be dangerous at night, but further north he said he watched people walking the streets and conversing without the worry of arrest and torture.

"My sister, she is a teacher," he added. "Before she was told what to teach and watched closely. Now she is free to teach children many things."

Abdul's family stayed in Kurdistan, while most of his in-laws relocated to New Zealand. He never recovered the possessions he left behind, but he has no regrets.

"My daughter, she can be a doctor, my son a lawyer," he said. "They are free to choose. And the Kurdish people they are free now, too. That is good." ♦

***"No Kurdish people can talk about freedom.  
You do and people look for you, to arrest you."***

**—Abdul Wahab Najmudin Mohammed**

# Airmen sail high seas to bring comfort to Latin America

*Editor's note: Staff Sgt. Ben Vickery, Master Sgt. Vicki Deering, and Tech. Sgt. Ron Pelletier, members from the 157th Air Refueling Wing Medical Group, deployed on the US Naval Ship Comfort for four months. Comfort is on a humanitarian mission to Latin America to provide medical, dental and veterinary care for local citizens. Vickery kept a journal of the deployment, which has given him a deep sense of gratification to help those in need.*

## Belize to Guatemala

We left Belize yesterday and sailed 100 miles south to Guatemala. We are just about settled into a routine in which we work 16 hours a day on average. Most of the medical care we administer is done right here on the ship so we send less than half our people ashore.

I spent some time working in the post-anesthesia care unit but now I am working mostly in the intensive care unit. In ICU, we see the more complicated patients from the operating room – skin grafts, club feet, bowel/colon re-sections and complicated hernias and airways.

Our patient load was medium to light in Belize, but in Guatemala we expect a heavier load. There was an earthquake there two weeks ago, so I expect we will get slammed but that's a good thing. The more people who show up, the more people we can help.

We are all also learning to speak the Navy lingo – head instead of latrine, hatch instead of door, galley and mess deck instead of chow hall or dining facility. I sleep in a rack in berthing, not in a bed in my quarters. My peers are my shipmates, not fellow airmen. We don't clean, we field day. Stairs are ladders. A mop is a swab, a broom is ... well, a broom.

I did not get to go ashore in Belize because all the surgical patients, mostly children ranging from 12 days to 13 years old, came through the sections I worked in. They cried a lot, but a crying post-operative child is a healthy child.

## Guatemala to Colon, Panama

We are currently under way from Guatemala to Colon, Panama, and should arrive tomorrow. We are in a pretty good storm now. The ship is rolling side to side about five or more degrees every 10 seconds and there are lots of people tossing their cookies. Hopefully, we should be out of the wind tomorrow when we anchor.

Things are going well here. We are very busy when we are in port or anchored off shore. There are lots of patients to take care of post-surgery. In fact, we had 65 patients in 48 hours and most came in on the first day before 8 p.m. We were slammed. We certainly found out what our maximum capacity was in post operation. It was fantastic and chaotic, and we got the job done.

We have very long days when we are taking patients and mostly go right to our racks to sleep afterwards. However, when we aren't sleeping, our downtime consists of going to chow, reading, working out or going out on deck to hang out. We have a small library with a few computers and can access e-mail almost anytime.

I have worked on so many people who don't speak English. They are all grateful and smile when not in pain or throwing up, but I wish I could really talk to them.

The other day, I was walking down the main passage and coming the other way was a group of patients heading for the boats to take



them home. Two men in the crowd waved to me and motioned for me to come to them. They were a father who was about 50 years old and his son who was in his 30s. The son had been in for a hernia operation and his father was his escort. I actually helped him stand up for the first time after his operation. We couldn't speak to one another in the same language, but they both shook my hand, smiled and gave me a big thumbs up.

## Panama City, Panama

We just finished three days of liberty in Panama City, Panama. It was relaxing and we had a little fun, but mostly we took the time to decompress from shipboard life.

There was a McDonald's, which I ate at once. There was also a Dunkin Donuts and I was there every day. I must have eaten about eight donuts by myself in three days – jellies, frosted and glazed. MMMMMMMM. The coffee was good, too. They didn't have cream, just milk, but otherwise it was exactly the same, just in Spanish. It was hard to order the first time, but once I got the hang of it, it was fine.

Tomorrow we leave for Nicaragua and then El Salvador. We will be working the next six or seven ports without a break which is about two months. It's not going to be easy and I don't expect much to be different from here on out.

Here some numbers:

- 3000 pairs of glasses given away
  - 4,500 prescriptions written and issued (for free)
  - 40-50 teeth per day pulled in port
  - 20-30 surgeries per day in port
  - \$150,000 in over the counter medicine given away
- And we have only stopped in three places so far.

## Panama Canal

We traversed the Panama Canal today. It was quite an experience. It took us about 11 hours to go through the canal and all its locks and we are now in the Pacific.

It was hot and unbelievably humid today so we had a cookout on the flight deck of the ship. The Navy band played some great rock music and we had burgers, hot dogs and Wise potato chips. There were some folding chairs that acted as our coolers holding sodas, juice and water. Ships passing us going towards the Atlantic looked over to see a few hundred shipmates listening to a rock band playing Bon Jovi and eating burgers and drinking soda. It was fun and lasted several hours. The rest of the day we just watched how things were done to get through the canal.

It was quite an experience, which I will have to go through again next month in order to come back, so we can work on the east coast of South America and Haiti and then home.

The same day, an 8-year-old boy came onboard with casts on both his legs. He had a birth defect that kept his legs from straightening so he couldn't walk. The doctors fixed him up in less than two hours, but he had a reaction to the anesthesia. We were real worried about him for about an hour. He stopped breathing on his own, so we breathed for him until he came back. His mother, who spoke broken English, asked Lt. Commander Lopez to transcribe a letter to us.

Below is what the letter said. ❖

*USNS Comfort:*  
7/1/2007

*I cannot find the proper words to say what my heart is feeling. You are angels making miracles. Thank you very much for helping my people. Most of all, thank you for giving my child Javier a chance to be able to walk. He is very smart, 8-year-old, and you can be sure that all of you will be in his and my prayers.*

*May God bless you all, and Dr. Shirley, you have blessed hands and you will be Javier's hero for ever!!!*

*In the name of my people and my country Guatemala  
To all and each many thanks!!!!*



## Airlift Detachment bound for Middle East

**CONCORD** – Gov. John Lynch joined state leaders, family and friends on Sept. 1 to honor six soldiers from the NH Army National Guard's Operational Support Airlift (OSA) Detachment 18, who deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Detachment 18 is a fixed-wing aircraft unit that transports passengers and cargo with time, place or mission-sensitive requirements both locally and worldwide. The unit was established in 1995.

The four pilots and two flight operation specialists will report to Fort Benning, Georgia for training before they depart to the Middle East. They will be based in Kuwait and support missions throughout Iraq, Afghanistan and Europe. They are scheduled to deploy for a period of six months. The team includes Chief Warrant Officer 5's Mike Boyle and Greg Harville, Chief Warrant Officer 4's Erich Hahn and Bill Buckle, Sgt. 1st Class Pete Leahy and Sgt. Dave Breton.

Detachment 18 has performed missions throughout the U.S. and Latin America. Recent missions include New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Montana to transport equipment for fighting wildfires. They have operated in Canada, Peru, Bolivia and Columbia supporting the US Army and other Department of Defense agencies. The unit was established in 1995. ❖



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# Army Promotions & Awards

## Lieutenant Colonel

David F. Baker  
Brian A. Phillips  
David R. Routhier  
Wayne W. Santos  
Daniel T. Wilson

## Major

Melinda A. Morin

## Captain

Adam Burritt  
Paul M. Granada

## First Lieutenant

Matthew M. Dupuis  
Eileen C. Healy  
Heath D. Huffman

## Second Lieutenant

Cullen T. Debourgkrecht

## Chief Warrant Officer 4

Diane S. Fredette

## Chief Warrant Officer 2

Thomas M. Dunn

## Master Sergeant

Margie Carol Arwine

## Sergeant 1st Class

Oscar Bowley  
Carolyn Ann Hodge  
Ryan Lane Bisson  
Thomas Eugene Quillin  
Paul Romeo Provencher  
Paul Richard Blanchette  
Ricky Gilbert Pinette

## Staff Sergeant

Elizabeth Wolfgram Hebert  
Eric Darrell Moore  
Adam Edward Haggett  
Brian Keith Schwartzkopf  
Robert Carle Carpenter  
Thomas Alfred Curtis Jr  
Dennis Patrick Cremin  
Sheldon Perry Tappin  
Mark Joseph Fazio  
Michael Tobias Estes  
Peter Bernadin Belanger  
Brian Robert Willette  
Scott Jerold Whitaker  
Michael Claude Levesque  
Kory Lee Mccauley  
Mark Richard Penny

## Sergeant

Matthew Reny Chambers  
David Paul Breton  
Joshua Michael Dubois  
Christopher Robert Smith  
Robert Byron Brown  
Jonathan Michael Morales  
Adria Leigh Hadlock  
Paul Michael Stone II  
Eric Scott Crane  
Lawrence F Prentice  
Jered Stephen Maguire

John Patrick Conway  
Tabatha Katherine Gilmore

## Specialist

Jessica Ann Dodier  
Greggory Christophe Chapman  
Stephen Weston Jr Copp  
William Theodore Thibeault  
Corey Michael Bickford  
Elizabeth Shirley Hayes  
Jonathan Richard Davis  
Joseph William Tropea  
Daniel Francis Hill  
Lemuel Alvin Wong  
Frank Shelton Crabtree IV  
Brandon Michael Cabrera

## Private 1st Class

Greg Michael Mcgonigle  
Charles Moulton Noyes IV  
Ryan Joseph Gauthier  
Joseph Albert Chenard Jr  
Daniel Patrick Galligan  
Kenneth Herbert White  
Gregory James Wilson  
William Bowdrie French  
Eric James Dancause  
Hermanus Stephanu Pretorius  
Nicholas Edgar Miller

Kim Michael Klode  
John Raymond Minahan  
Scott Richard Parent  
Samantha Gail Latulippe  
Felicia Jean Daughraty  
Kristina Marie Nee  
Meghan Lin Croto  
Joseph Vincent Costanzo  
Nicole Lillian Huard  
Anthony John Rorick  
Kenneth David Jones  
Chad Michael Martin  
Jonathan Georges  
Stephen Thomas Simms  
Jonathan Raymond Demers  
Mathew Robert Pelchat  
James Lawrence Drew  
Andrew Keith Watson  
Daniel Francis Morel  
Lincoln Nathaniel Judd  
Robert Paul Remillard  
Christopher Wallace Plante  
James Rocco Dirosa  
Luke James Kendall  
Gary Oscar Rumrill  
Adam Tavis Rich  
Matthew Ryan Cornell  
Timothy Charles Weatherford

## Private 2

Stephen Kenneth Aubin  
Vivan Thi Duong  
Kiefer Donovan Digregorio  
Ashley Jean Maxner  
Thomas John Fellows  
John Willard Vanderbeck  
Kyle Benjamin Beaudet  
Clayton Willard Kuusisto  
Christopher Lee Brown  
Allen Mark Pike III  
Joseph Alfred Emond  
Joshua Thomas Adams  
Darel Hadley Dean  
Aaron Scott Deangelis  
Sean Patrick Marron  
Jeffrey Scott Gagnon  
Kory Algary Gary Orfant  
Jason Marc Fencik  
William Fredrick Duggan III  
Jeffrey Nathan Key  
Jonathan Allen Tilton  
Len Allen Larrabee Jr  
Daniel Gregory Nichols  
Adam Cole Rich  
Michael David Drouin  
Kevin Russell Tattersall



## NH Army National Guard NCO of the year

Sgt. Allen W. Johnson of Manchester, a soldier with HHS, 1/172 Field Artillery Battalion, was selected as the New Hampshire Army National Guard's NCO of the year. Allen recently moved to Colorado to take a job with Raytheon and is still a member of the National Guard.

Johnson served in Iraq with HHS, 1st Battalion, 172nd Forward in Camp Bucca, Iraq. ❖

# Air Promotions & Awards

## Lieutenant Colonel

Christopher Hurley  
Elizabeth Sweeney

## Captain

Christine Banks

## First Lieutenant

Autumn Ricker  
James Wallace Jr.  
Matthew Turk  
Karl Smith

## Chief Master Sergeant

Brenda Blonigen  
Anthony Lebel  
Cesar Davila

## Senior Master Sergeant

Carolyn Chute-Festervan  
John Craig  
Keith Downs  
Phillip Erwin  
Robert Wheaton

## Master Sergeant

Stanley Norton  
Nancy Young  
Richard Booker  
Tim Psaledakis  
Michael Boisvert

## Technical Sergeant

Arthur Dicenso III  
Cori Jordan  
Kenneth O'Brien  
Benjamin Bartlett  
Anthony Brown  
Daniel Leonard  
Eric Kimber  
Adam Hart  
Jason Laferte

## Staff Sergeant

Jeremy Hutchinson  
Kevin Johnson  
Rebecca Hegarty  
Darcy Cote  
Aaron Burne

Scott Elms  
Randy Smith  
Mathew Steer  
Emily Hanson  
Evan Appleton  
Jillian Smith  
Keith Williams  
Daryl Iannillo

## Senior Airman

Russell Georgio  
Daniel Young  
Adam Hulst  
Danielle Lewis

## Airman 1st Class

John McDowell  
John Pepper III  
Jareb Kinney  
Rebecca York

## Air National Guard NCO of the Year



*Tech. Sgt. Robert C. Saye of Fitchburg, Mass., 157th Air Refueling Wing, was selected as the New Hampshire Air National Guard's NCO of the Year. Saye was recognized for his service in Afghanistan as well as the exceptional work while assigned as an intelligence NCO at Pease. Saye is active in his community as a volunteer soccer coach and assistant Sunday school teacher, while additionally enrolled in college and Professional Military Education courses. Saye is employed as a senior systems engineer at Starent Networks in Tewksbury, Mass.*

## Guardsmen groove on G-RAP to tune of \$250K

Story compiled by NH Army and Air Recruiting



*NH Air Guard Recruiter Tech Sgt. Beverly Wallace presents Senior Airman Valerie Johnson of the 157th Air Refueling Wing's Logistics Readiness Squadron with a check for \$4,000 for recruiting two members into the Air National Guard earlier this year. Johnson was the first NH Air Guardsman to receive a double payment for the G-RAP program.*

Some of us are old enough to remember a national shampoo commercial where a woman who has just used it "tells two friends." Those two friends tell two friends and so on until the television screen is a patchwork of tiny squares of friends spreading the word about this remarkable hair cleanser.

The notion is that the strongest sales pitch for any product is from the people who use it – a kind of grass-roots marketing campaign that starts from the inside out.

NH National Guard's Recruiting Assistance Program, or G-RAP, is something like that except the payoff is hard cash, not silky soft hair. Members of the Guard and retirees can refer a friend to their

respective Army or Air Guard recruiting office, and if their friend enlists, they earn \$2,000. There's some fine print, but in general, it's as simple as taking an online tutorial to qualify as a "recruiting assistant." You can make more, if you refer someone to the officer program.

As of this month, nearly 500 NH citizen soldiers and airmen, and retirees have signed on to the program. More than 150 enlistments have been generated and another 245 are in the pipeline as potential enlistments. In dollars, that equates to almost a quarter of a million earmarked for referrals.

"This program has become a powerful tool in the recruiting arsenal," said Lt. Col. Ralph Huber, commander of NH Army Guard Recruiting and Retention Command. "This is an incredible opportunity for soldiers to directly participate in the recruiting process as independent contractors."

When the national recruiting program kicked off in 2005, the press and some within our organization ridiculed it as a bounty program. A *Boston Globe* reporter compared it to health club and telemarketing gimmicks.

Two years later, G-RAP has flourished into one of the most successful recruiting campaigns in the Guard's history.

"It sure does make it easier when it comes time to go Christmas shopping," said Sgt. Kenneth Piehler, the NH Guard's recruiting assistant. His referrals have translated into five recruits for the NH Army Guard and \$10,000 of personal income.

In Stephen Shea's view, recruiting from the inside has always been a tradition of the NH Guard.

"I look at the Guard as a family," said Shea, one of the NH Air Guard's top recruiting assistants. "I have been recruiting ever since I joined the unit. G-RAP is just an extra benefit."

For more information go to [www.guardrecruitingassistant.com](http://www.guardrecruitingassistant.com). ♦

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